

Gustavus Disposal & Recycling Center (DRC) Quarterly Staff Report
Paul Berry, DRC Manager/ Operator
Monday, May 10th, 2021

My last quarterly report was at the February 8th General Meeting. My next quarterly report is scheduled for the August 9th General Meeting.

General Operations and Management

Labor

This year's DRC Temporary Labor Pool (the "Pool") started the year with fewer members than in years past, three of a possible five. This spring two of the three members have informed me they will be winding down their work schedules at the DRC and leaving the Pool. Because of this I am facing a significant labor shortfall going into summer. This is unfortunate in a number of ways: the short period of time between when the ground thaws and Glacier Bay Lodge opens, is the window for packaging batteries, packaging e-waste, and for doing bale burial. So with a late spring and a labor shortage a number of these opportunities will be missed this year. To address this foreseen labor shortage, in early April I re-advertised the Pool with the hopes of drawing in at least two new members.

Budget

This years budget process has been far more trying than other years – we all know the factors: the pandemic, fiscal uncertainty, and a deep rooted concern among some members the community that new regular positions with the City are going to lead to property taxes (I am sorry, but I don't get that one). My feeling on the matter is that a lack of continuity in the management of the DRC will probably cost the City more in the long run than the savings achieved by having no one more than one regular position at the DRC at one time. However, I also understand that a 2nd regular position at the DRC does not guarantee that the DRC will have stable and knowledgeable management over time. I am just trying to plan ahead.

While it is outside the purview of my position as DRC Manager, I believe that as federal funding and savings for road maintenance dries up, the Council needs to find a way to fund road maintenance outside of relying on current sales tax and bed tax income.

Pandemic impacts

I am going to wait until the August report to present the numbers for FY21, which I believe will be the fiscal year most impacted (so far) by the pandemic.

Allowing two cars at a time to offload their deliveries of waste at the same time

This is part of the DRC's slow migration back to "normal" customer inflow. I want to point out though that controlling the number of vehicles allowed to unload their waste at one time is here to stay. I am working to come up with the appropriate signs and informational fliers to illustrate any changes. I hope to have this in place by June.

The waste mound

This spring for a week or two the muddy conditions were so bad on the mound that we had to park the bales of waste in an intermediate storage spot and later move them into their permanent position in the balefill once the ground had dried out a little. As I have mentioned in prior reports the soils available to the DRC are generally overburden and clay rich or silt rich soils. While our local clay will make an excellent cap once the mound has reached its final height, it is a challenge to work with during wet times and I am working a few remedies for the problem.

Compost sales

The DRC's annual compost sale is scheduled for Friday May 7th. This is one or two weeks later than usual but this has been a colder spring than usual. The compost looks pretty good and like last year I sent a sample to a professional laboratory for analysis. The lab report has come back good:

https://cms.gustavus-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/disposal/_recycling_center/page/20691/soiltest_c21-572_city_of_gustavus_c2.pdf

Community Chest

The Chest continues to have an awesome group of volunteers led by our Crew Boss, Vicki Bender. Currently there are number of specialists volunteering in a given area such as Ellie Sharman maintaining the crafts section, Penny Cook going through the electronics (making sure items work and have their correct power supply etc.) and Sasha Smith going through kitchenware.

Thrift stores take a lot of effort to be a success and I would like to thank our front desk sales staff: Vicki, Katy Dighton, Becky King and Amanda Dunaway. I would also like to thank the following individuals for their efforts in going through donations, purging old stock and moving seasonal items up into, and down from the attic: Sasha, Vicki, Amanda, Penny, Artemis BonaDea, Melisa (? last name), Debbie H?, Joyce Lupro, Meadow Brook and Sean Tevebaugh. Thanks again to Amanda for organizing shipments of surplus clothes to Hoonah and I know she was working on getting clothes to Angoon as well.

The staff has been having to deal with some of our dear residents leaving their donations outdoors during off-hours without notice. No act quite takes the volunteer staff at the Chest for granted like a resident leaving their bag or box of donations right in front of the sign that says "donations are only accepted when the Chest is open or by appointment". I ask that the members of our community respect the volunteers who run the Chest and please comply with our donations policy.

Solid Waste Management and Facility Planning Process ("SWMP") & SEASWA the Southeast Alaska Solid Waste Authority

As stated in some of my previous reports, SEASWA is a board made up of representatives from the communities that have elected to join the organization. The purpose of SEASWA is to pool our resources and figure out ways of dealing with our solid waste as a region. I have mischaracterized SEASWA in my earlier reports as being all about the exporting of solid waste and this is not all of what SEASWA is about. I believe SEASWA will provide us with a louder voice when approaching the legislature or other political organizations within the state when it comes to matters dealing with solid waste which includes the shipping of recyclables. Because Gustavus is a small "end of the spoke" community, the cost of shipping is everything and I believe membership in SEASWA is good tool to have in our solid waste toolbox going forward.

Because membership in SEASWA amends the charter of the City, the voters of Gustavus will have to decide if membership in SEASWA is in our best interest and the Council will need to take action on creating a ballot question for our October ballot. This Council action should be no later than July or August if it is going to happen. It is important to take action sooner than latter as I want to be able to address any concerns or misinformation people might have about the organization before a possible vote in October.

Not all of my planning in the SWMP process is about the exporting of non-recyclable solid waste. Another alternative I am looking at is expanding the mound in several phases that

when concluded at some time in the distant future would utilize most of the City's 11+ acre parcel with the contiguous earthen mound of waste, the sprawling DRC facility and buffer zones. Considering how long our use of the current area inside the fence has lasted us, 27 years and counting, the community could potentially use the 11 acre parcel for more than one generation but a significantly larger mound would also create a large, permanent landmark, and add to the risk of odor and ground water contamination.

Capital Project Summaries

New Composting Facility/ Quonset replacement

Project description:

As described in previous reports, the objective of this project is to replace the failing Quonset structure with a more robust composting facility capable of processing greater amounts of material in a more temperature controlled manner than our current facility can. This project also seeks to pave more of the composting yard with concrete and install concrete push walls behind the piles of wood chips, sawdust, overs and curing compost.

Project status:

There has been no progress on this project since one year ago.

In-flow Storage Area Project

Project description:

More information about the purpose of this storage area can be found in earlier reports or in the DRC's General Operations Plan.

Project Status:

All that remains in this project is finishing the installation of the 8' chain-link fencing around the storage area and installing the gate. This project is very close to completion.

Household Hazardous Waste Facility

Project description:

This project is the specification and purchase of a 20' long x 8' wide & 8' high container designed for storing equipment fuel, used lead-acid and dry-cell batteries and other miscellaneous hazardous materials. The unit includes spill containment, ventilation, lighting, shelving, and signage. The proposed container will be fully-constructed at a facility in the lower 48 and is ready to use upon arrival in Gustavus. In the interest of flexibility and convenience, I have determined that the facility should be designed as a 4-hour structure so that it can be placed anywhere on the DRC property, even right next to the main building.

Project Status:

I have submitted the specifications for the structure to the Fire Marshal and once those specifications are approved I will go back to the three vendors who are bidding on the project for a final quote. While there are sufficient funds in the project for the purchase of the unit, there will probably not be sufficient funds for the transportation and installment of the facility. I am hoping that some of the money remaining from the In-flow storage area project can be used for freight, placement of the facility in the in-flow storage area and electrical hook-up.

Year-round running water

This is hot & cold running water in the changing room of the office building. This is a

project funded by the CARES Act and is very close to completion.

New main building

Conceptually this project has been supported by the Council with the adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan COG_CIP 2021-2025 document and the scoping document for the new building. At this point in time I am collection information and ideas. There may be more to report on this project during my next quarterly report. The main building is the heart of our operation and I hope to take this project as far as I can with my remaining time as DRC Manager.

The end, thank you.
05/05/21

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